

Air Defenders keeping watch over Dragoon Base



Spc. Carlos Antoine Fields, Air Defense Artillery Battery, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, observes incoming vehicles during a recent guard shift on Dragoon Forward Operating Base.

Story and photo by Pfc. Erik LeDrew, 122nd MPAD BAGHDAD, Iraq -- Pulling guard duty is something nearly every Soldier does at some point during his or her deployment. And, the troopers of the Air Defense Artillery Battery, 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, based at Dragoon Forward Operating Base are no exception.

Whether it's been standing watch in a tower, manning a gate at the forward operating base, or being part of Dragoon's quick response force, the troopers of the ADA have been there.

Spc. Morgan L. Kinney and Spc. Carlos Antoine Fields are air defender Soldiers who have been at Dragoon Base through the regiment's entire deployment.

"We've been here doing guard duty since mid-May 2003," said Kinney, 22, of Sacramento, Calif.

"When we first got here we'd have set shifts," said Fields, 22, of Hardeeville, S.C. "But that didn't last long."

According to Kinney, the ADA troopers who are not assigned to the QRF pull guard duty on a regular basis.

While many of the ADA troopers, such as those tasked to QRF, have responded to countless enemy attacks, Kinney and Fields' missions have been relatively uneventful.

"I've been pretty fortunate," said Fields. "I haven't been in any engagements since I've been here."

"We've taken the occasional round. And two months ago, one of the towers took an RPG (rocket-propelled grenade) round," added Kinney.

Guard shifts are generally slow and uneventful, punctuated by routine radio checks and the occasional walk-through inspection by the Sergeant of the Guard.

However, despite the quiet, the guards remain vigilant, Fields said.

While sitting in a tower, conversation becomes essential to keep yourself and your tower buddy alert, said Kinney.

"It's really easy to get bored up here in the tower. It depends on who you're with. If you've got a good conversation going, then it'll pass the time just fine," Fields said.

"You're going to get to know the guys you're out here with. I mean, all the skeletons I had in my closet when I came here are gone," said Kinney. "After two or three months you'll know everything there is to know about the buddies you pull guard with."

Now that they're getting ready to receive their replacements from the 1st Cavalry Division, Kinney and Fields say they are relieved that they're finally going back to the United States.

Fields also offered some advice for those incoming soldiers who have families back home.

"My advice is to stay focused over here. You've got a job to do, regardless of what happens back home," said Fields.

"It really ain't that bad out here. The worst part is just being away from home for so long. You've just got to stay focused on your job."

The Old Ironsides Report March 29, 2004

NEWS...

Briton, Canadian Killed in Northern Iraq

BAGHDAD, Iraq (AP) - Gunmen killed a Briton and a Canadian guarding a power station near Mosul on Sunday, in the second straight day of violence in the northern Iraqi city that was home to large numbers of Saddam Hussein's military officers. As U.S. soldiers and Iraqi police sealed the area, witnesses reported two partly burned bodies, both clad in blue clothing and flak jackets, were seen beside a burning four-wheel drive vehicle. One victim had been shot in the head.

New Hamas Leader Calls Bush 'The Enemy'

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) - The new Hamas leader in Gaza on Sunday called President Bush an enemy of Islam and said that "God declared war" against the United States and Israel - but stopped short of saying the group would strike U.S. targets. The Hamas chief, Abdel Aziz Rantisi, renewed threats to attack Israel in retaliation for the assassination of the group's founder, Sheik Ahmed Yassin, last week. He was addressing a Hamas rally at Gaza City's Islamic University.

Sept. 11 Panel to Press, Not Subpoena Rice

WASHINGTON (AP) - The independent commission investigating the Sept. 11 attacks will not relent in its pursuit of public testimony from the president's national security adviser but is unlikely to subpoena Condoleezza Rice, the panel's chairman said Sunday. The former chief counterterrorism adviser at the White House, who has criticized the Bush administration's preparedness for the attacks, said he would welcome the attempt by leading Republicans to declassify 2-year-old congressional testimony.

NASA Believes Test Jet Hit 5,000-Mph Mark

LOS ANGELES (AP) - Three years after its first test flight ended in an explosion, NASA on Saturday successfully launched an experimental jet that the agency believes reached a record-setting speed of about 5,000 mph. The unpiloted X-43A made an 11-second powered flight, then went through some twists and turns during a six-minute glide before plunging into the Pacific Ocean about 400 miles off the California coast.

Thought for the day...

Starting Afresh

Thomas A. Edison's plant was on fire. As he helplessly watched it burn, taking his costly experiments up in flames, he called his son Charles. "Come!" He said, "You'll never see anything like this again". Then he called his wife, and as all three stood gazing at the fire, Edison said, "There go all our mistakes. Now we can start over afresh." In two weeks he started rebuilding the plant, and it was not long before he invented the phonograph. The past does not dictate the future. In the ashes of past mistakes and failures lie materials needed to build future victories.

In other news...

Liberals Take on Conservatives on Talk Radio

By Andrew Stern, Reuters

CHICAGO (Reuters) - The gloves are coming off on talk radio. Comedian-provocateur Al Franken anchors Wednesday's launch of a new liberal radio network -- Air America -- that promises irreverent voices from the opposite end of the political spectrum to conservatives like Rush Limbaugh who dominate talk radio.

Franken visited Soldiers serving on the Baghdad International Airport during a USO tour in Dec. 2003.

"We're going to listen to (Limbaugh's) show and hold him up to scorn and ridicule," Franken said in a telephone interview.

The debut is auspiciously timed: the presidential candidates have come out swinging and liberal anger at Republican President Bush is at a fever pitch.

Network chief executive Mark Walsh said the goal was to skewer "pomposity" in high places regardless of political affiliation. "We're not in regime change radio," he said.

Walsh said his most recent job was as "the Internet guy" for presumptive Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry. Franken also knows Kerry, who along with filmmaker Michael Moore is a likely Air America guest.

The network will also feature other radio neophytes such as actress Janeane Garofalo, rapper Chuck D and activist Robert Kennedy Jr. Each will be paired with a radio veteran.

Franken will kick off with a three-hour midday show, "The O'Franken Factor," a mocking tribute to his broadcasting foe Bill O'Reilly's show on Fox News.

A former writer on NBC-TV's "Saturday Night Live," Franken wrote the best-selling comic diatribes "Rush Limbaugh is a Big Fat Idiot" and last year's "Lies and the Lying Liars Who Tell Them: A Fair and Balanced Look at the Right." The latter triggered a short-lived lawsuit from Fox News.

Franken's recent antics have earned him the label of comic brawler: he tackled a heckler at a Kerry event and offered to fight a magazine editor who said Democrats had "sissified" politics.

Franken turns serious when discussing Bush.

"This is a president who ran as a uniter not a divider and he's the most divisive president that I can remember," Franken said.

"He had an opportunity to lead us in a new American century united in purpose and sacrifice and blew it completely. He wanted for some reason very, very, very badly to attack Iraq ... (which) I think has damaged the war on terror."

Limbaugh and other conservative radio figures such as Sean Hannity and Michael Savage -- whose dominance of talk radio balances what some see as mainstream media's liberal bias -- have already begun mocking the upstart network.

"They're saying we're a bunch of wine-swilling cheese-eating liberal idiots; that it'll never work; that liberals don't listen to the radio; that all we did was hire a bunch of comics and not anybody that knows anything about radio," Walsh said.

Observers are unsure about Air America's chances of success but it has drawn an avalanche of publicity as the first liberal-minded radio network.

In truth, the serious-minded Pacifica network and segments of National Public Radio have already staked out liberal positions.

"If these guys succeed, you know who's going to be banging down their doors to get them on? All the guys running conservative talk radio. Radio's not a political business. Politics is just a product ... a prop," said Michael Harrison, publisher of Talkers, a magazine that covers the industry.

Air America is armed with \$30 million in investor cash and a \$30 million credit line being used to lease AM stations in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco, with more stations promised.

Today in History...

March 29, 1973: UNITED STATES WITHDRAWS FROM VIETNAM

(HISTORYCHANNEL.COM) Two months after the signing of the Vietnam peace agreement, the last U.S. combat troops leave South Vietnam as Hanoi frees the remaining American prisoners of war held in North Vietnam. America's direct eight-year intervention in the Vietnam War was at an end. In Saigon, some 7,000 U.S. Department of Defense civilian employees remained behind to aid South Vietnam in conducting what looked to be a fierce and ongoing war with communist North Vietnam.

In 1961, after two decades of indirect military aid, U.S. President John F. Kennedy sent the first large force of U.S. military personnel to Vietnam to bolster the ineffectual autocratic regime of South Vietnam against the communist North. Three years later, with the South Vietnamese government crumbling, President Lyndon B. Johnson ordered limited bombing raids on North Vietnam, and Congress authorized the use of U.S. troops. By 1965, North Vietnamese offensives left President Johnson with two choices: escalate U.S. involvement or withdraw. Johnson ordered the former, and troop levels soon jumped to more than 300,000 as U.S. air forces commenced the largest bombing campaign in history.

During the next few years, the extended length of the war, the high number of U.S. casualties, and the exposure of U.S. involvement in war crimes, such as the massacre at My Lai, helped turn many in the United States against the Vietnam War. The communists' Tet Offensive of 1968 crushed U.S. hopes of an imminent end to the conflict and galvanized U.S. opposition to the war. In response, Johnson announced in March 1968 that he would not seek reelection, citing what he perceived to be his responsibility in creating a perilous national division over Vietnam. He also authorized the beginning of peace talks.

In the spring of 1969, as protests against the war escalated in the United States, U.S. troop strength in the war-torn country reached its peak at nearly 550,000 men. Richard Nixon, the new U.S. president, began U.S. troop withdrawal and "Vietnamization" of the war effort that year, but he intensified bombing. Large U.S. troop withdrawals continued in the early 1970s as President Nixon expanded air and ground operations into Cambodia and Laos in attempts to block enemy supply routes along Vietnam's borders. This expansion of the war, which accomplished few positive results, led to new waves of protests in the United States and elsewhere.

Finally, in January 1973, representatives of the United States, North and South Vietnam, and the Vietcong signed a peace agreement in Paris, ending the direct U.S. military involvement in the Vietnam War. Its key provisions included a cease-fire throughout Vietnam, the withdrawal of U.S. forces, the release of prisoners of war, and the reunification of North and South Vietnam through peaceful means. The South Vietnamese government was to remain in place until new elections were held, and North Vietnamese forces in the South were not to advance further nor be reinforced.

In reality, however, the agreement was little more than a face-saving gesture by the U.S. government. Even before the last American troops departed on March 29, the communists violated the cease-fire, and by early 1974 full-scale war had resumed. At the end of 1974, South Vietnamese authorities reported that 80,000 of their soldiers and civilians had been killed in fighting during the year, making it the most costly of the Vietnam War.

On April 30, 1975, the last few Americans still in South Vietnam were airlifted out of the country as Saigon fell to communist forces. North Vietnamese Colonel Bui Tin, accepting the surrender of South Vietnam later in the day, remarked, "You have nothing to fear; between Vietnamese there are no victors and no vanquished. Only the Americans have been defeated." The Vietnam War was the longest and most unpopular foreign war in U.S. history and cost 58,000 American lives. As many as two million Vietnamese soldiers and civilians were killed.



CONTACT YOUR UNIT VOTING ASSISTANCE OFFICER TO FIND OUT HOW TO REGISTER TO VOTE
AND RECEIVE YOUR ABSENTEE BALLOT

The following are upcoming Presidential and State Primaries:

April: Pennsylvania

May: Indiana, North Carolina, Nebraska, West Virginia, Arkansas, Kentucky, Oregon, Idaho

June: Alabama, New Mexico, S. Dakota, Iowa, Maine, Montana, New Jersey, North Dakota, S. Carolina, Virginia, Utah

July: Georgia, Oklahoma

August: Kansas, Michigan, Missouri, Tennessee, Colorado, Connecticut, Wyoming, Alaska, Florida

September: Guam, Arizona, Nevada, Delaware, Virgin Islands, District of Columbia, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, Vermont, Washington, Wisconsin, Hawaii, Louisiana

November: American Samoa, **2004 GENERAL ELECTION (NOVEMBER 2)**

****Unit VAO's can direct questions to the Division VAO, CPT Morgan, at DNV 551-0311****

The Old Ironsides Report

March 29, 2004

myafn.net TV SCHEDULES: MONDAY, MARCH 29, 2004

As of: Sunday, March 28, 2004 9:56:16 PM

| Start Time | SPORTS | ATLANTIC | SPECTRUM | PACIFIC | NEWS | Start Time |
|------------|--|---|--|---|------------------------------|------------|
| 00:00 | | | AMERICAN IDOL (TVG): | | CNN SUNDAY | 00:00 |
| 01:00 | | | | | MEET THE PRESS | 01:00 |
| 01:30 | ESPNEWS | | | | | 01:30 |
| 02:00 | ESPNEWS | | AMERICAN IDOL (TVG): | | TIM RUSSERT | 02:00 |
| 02:30 | NBA - PHILADELPHIA 76ERS @ BOSTON CELTICS | | THE TWILIGHT ZONE (TVPG): - THE OBSOLETE MAN | | | 02:30 |
| 03:00 | | HEADLINE NEWS | ROCKET POWER (TVY): - MERV LINKS TO OTTO/ BIG AIR | DORA: THE EXPLORER (TVY): - WHOSE BIRTHDAY | FOX REPORT | 03:00 |
| 03:30 | | ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT (TVPG): | THE FAIRLY ODDPARENTS (TVY): - FOUR BALLED/ THE BOY WHO WOULD BE QUEEN | WHEEL OF FORTUNE (TVG): | | 03:30 |
| 04:00 | | | THE SIMPSONS (TVPG): - LISA'S PONY | THE DR. PHIL SHOW (TVPG): | THIS WEEK | 04:00 |
| 04:30 | | WWE SMACKDOWN! (TV14): | THE COSBY SHOW (TVG): - DENISE GETS A "D" | | | 04:30 |
| 05:00 | WOMEN'S COLLEGE BASKETBALL - NCAA CHAMPIONSHIP - SWEET 16: BAYLOR VS TENNESSEE | | BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER (TV14): - END OF DAYS | THE OPRAH WINFREY SHOW (TVPG): | DATELINE INTERNATIONAL | 05:00 |
| 05:30 | | AMERICA'S BLACK FORUM | | | | 05:30 |
| 06:00 | | MEET THE PRESS | LAW & ORDER (TV14): - DEEP VOTE | HEADLINE NEWS | 60 MINUTES | 06:00 |
| 06:30 | | | | JUDGE JUDY (TVPG): | | 06:30 |
| 07:00 | SPORTSCENTER | HEADLINE NEWS | THE NEW DETECTIVES (TV14): - MATERIAL WITNESS | ACCESS HOLLYWOOD | CNN PRESENTS | 07:00 |
| 07:25 | | | | GUIDING LIGHT (TV14): | | 07:25 |
| 07:30 | | ESPNEWS | | | | 07:30 |
| 08:00 | | SESAME STREET | MONSTER GARAGE (TVPG): - WEDDING CHAPEL | | LARRY KING LIVE | 08:00 |
| 08:13 | | | | GENERAL HOSPITAL (TV14): | | 08:13 |
| 08:30 | COLLEGE GAMENIGHT | | | | | 08:30 |
| 09:00 | | DORA: THE EXPLORER (TVY): - WHOSE BIRTHDAY | THE HAUNTING | LILLO & STITCH: THE ANIMATED SERIES (TVG): - YAPPER | AT LARGE WITH GERALDO RIVERA | 09:00 |
| 09:30 | SPORTSCENTER | WHEEL OF FORTUNE (TVG): | | DIGIMON: DIGITAL MONSTERS (TVY7): - DEPARTURE FOR A NEW CONTINENT | | 09:30 |
| 10:00 | | THE DR. PHIL SHOW (TVPG): | | DRAGONFLY TV (YR. 1) | ACCESS HOLLYWOOD | 10:00 |
| 10:30 | | | | EVEN STEVENS (TVG): - STARSTRUCK | | 10:30 |
| 10:46 | | THE OPRAH WINFREY SHOW (TVPG): | | | | 10:46 |
| 11:00 | PGA TOUR - THE PLAYERS CHAMPIONSHIP: FINAL ROUND | | ROCKET POWER (TVY): - MERV LINKS TO OTTO/ BIG AIR | JEOPARDY! (TVG): | BELTWAY BOYS | 11:00 |
| 11:30 | | | THE FAIRLY ODDPARENTS (TVY): - FOUR BALLED/ THE BOY WHO WOULD BE QUEEN | HEADLINE NEWS | FOX NEWS WATCH | 11:30 |
| 11:35 | | GUIDING LIGHT (TV14): | | | | 11:35 |
| 11:52 | | | | PACIFIC REPORT | | 11:52 |
| 12:00 | | | THE SIMPSONS (TVPG): - LISA'S PONY | ESPNEWS | BULLS & BEARS | 12:00 |
| 12:17 | | GENERAL HOSPITAL (TV14): | | | | 12:17 |
| 12:30 | | | THE COSBY SHOW (TVG): - DENISE GETS A "D" | HEADLINE NEWS | CAVUTO ON BUSINESS | 12:30 |
| 12:52 | | | | PACIFIC REPORT | | 12:52 |
| 13:00 | | HEADLINE NEWS | BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER (TV14): - END OF DAYS | 60 MINUTES | ACCESS HOLLYWOOD | 13:00 |
| 13:30 | | JUDGE JUDY (TVPG): | | | | 13:30 |
| 14:00 | | LILLO & STITCH: THE ANIMATED SERIES (TVG): - YAPPER | LAW & ORDER (TV14): - DEEP VOTE | NYPD BLUE (TV14): - MAYBE BABY | DATELINE NBC | 14:00 |
| 14:30 | | DIGIMON: DIGITAL MONSTERS (TVY7): - DEPARTURE FOR A NEW CONTINENT | | | | 14:30 |
| 15:00 | | TODAY | THE NEW DETECTIVES (TV14): - MATERIAL WITNESS | WITHOUT A TRACE (TVPG): - MAPLE STREET | GOOD MORNING AMERICA | 15:00 |
| 16:00 | SPORTSCENTER | | MONSTER GARAGE (TVPG): - WEDDING CHAPEL | HEADLINE NEWS | | 16:00 |
| 16:22 | | | | PACIFIC REPORT | | 16:22 |
| 16:30 | | | | TONIGHT SHOW WITH JAY LENO (TVPG): | | 16:30 |
| 17:00 | | DRAGONFLY TV (YR. 1) | THE HAUNTING | | HEADLINE NEWS | 17:00 |
| 17:30 | NBA FASTBREAK | EVEN STEVENS (TVG): - STARSTRUCK | | THE LATE SHOW WITH DAVID LETTERMAN (TVPG): | CHANNEL ONE | 17:30 |
| 17:45 | | | | | ABC WORLD NEWS THIS MORNING | 17:45 |
| 18:00 | COLLEGE GAMENIGHT | JEOPARDY! (TVG): | | | THE EARLY SHOW | 18:00 |
| 18:30 | | HEADLINE NEWS | | ACCESS HOLLYWOOD | | 18:30 |
| 19:00 | SPORTSCENTER | ESPNEWS | ROCKET POWER (TVY): - MERV LINKS TO OTTO/ BIG AIR | IN A LONELY PLACE | | 19:00 |
| 19:30 | | HEADLINE NEWS | THE FAIRLY ODDPARENTS (TVY): - FOUR BALLED/ THE BOY WHO WOULD BE QUEEN | | | 19:30 |
| 20:00 | | 60 MINUTES | THE SIMPSONS (TVPG): - LISA'S PONY | | FOX NEWS LIVE | 20:00 |
| 20:30 | NHL - ST. LOUIS BLUES @ CHICAGO BLACKHAWKS- | | THE COSBY SHOW (TVG): - DENISE GETS A "D" | | | 20:30 |
| 20:45 | | | | SAME TIME, NEXT YEAR | | 20:45 |
| 21:00 | | NYPD BLUE (TV14): - MAYBE BABY | BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER (TV14): - END OF DAYS | | DATELINE NBC | 21:00 |
| 22:00 | | WITHOUT A TRACE (TVPG): - MAPLE STREET | LAW & ORDER (TV14): - DEEP VOTE | | FOX NEWS LIVE | 22:00 |
| 23:00 | MLB - SPRING TRAINING: CHICAGO CUBS @ ANAHEIM ANGELS | HEADLINE NEWS | THE NEW DETECTIVES (TV14): - MATERIAL WITNESS | ESPNEWS: THE HOT LIST | HEADLINE NEWS | 23:00 |
| 23:30 | | TONIGHT SHOW WITH JAY LENO (TVPG): | | HEADLINE NEWS | INSIDE POLITICS | 23:30 |